THE STUDY OF PERSPECTIVE.

At a period when a taste for art is diffused amongst the masses by means of the many exhibitions and collections of pictures, both public and private, aided, indeed, by individual munificence, it becomes incumbent upon the schools and professors of art to call in the aid of science in assisting the development of that taste by throwing open the portals of knowledge, and rendering art-education accessible to all who seek it.

Drawing is esteemed a pleasing and requisite appendage to a liberal education; but PERSPECTIVE, which is a key to a knowledge of drawing, or, if I may so term it, a lantern in a dark and difficult road, is too often neglected, and the student is left to his own resources for fathoming the laws whereby forms change their character according to the position in which they are viewed. A modern author has said justly—"The art of perspective is a branch of knowledge very rarely cultivated, from the prevailing idea that it is useful only to architects and some few artists, and that it is in no way recreative or instructive as an accomplishment." The same author adds further—"That this notion evidently arises from the art being misunderstood." "Drawing receives but half its share of importance, and merits a much higher value than is popularly assigned to it, for besides the amusement it affords, it is, when taught on principle, a source of extensive knowledge." The object of the artist or draughtsman is to delineate forms in two ways,—first, simply by their dimensions, or geometrically; secondly, by their appearances or variation of those dimensions in appearance when viewed by a person from some chosen position, and hence called perspective, and that part of optics which applies to representation. Artists whose profession it is to delineate these forms, and *connoisseurs* who would aspire to *judge* of the correctness of their productions, ought to possess a knowledge of the principles of perspective, to make their judgment of any value.

From the number of works on perspective, many of them differing in principles, their difficult nomenclature, mixed up with much irrelevant matter, and not unfrequently peculiar *crotchets* of their authors, the student has much difficulty in deciding what system to follow, and from the numerous obstacles impeding his way, as also for want of a little judicious instruction, becomes disgusted with the supposed difficulties,—neglects that which ought to have been the primary cause of his education,—and rests upon the questionable veracity of his eye for the correctness of his delineations.

The generally superficial character of lectures leaves some amount of thought and labour to be performed by the student who wishes to make himself master of the science. The lecturer, therefore, stands in the position of a pioneer to a more extended knowledge, dependent upon the industry and intelligence of the student himself; and those who wish to perfect themselves in this art, if they meet with difficulties, must seek the assistance of an able professor, from the circumstance of its being next to impossible to convey a complete knowledge of the art in all its intricacies in a limited course of lectures, which shall be at once erudite and popular.

I have now come to that part of my discourse at which I feel it incumbent on me to address a few words to the young members of the school,—to those aspiring spirits who, within the walls of this institution, replete as it is with everything that can forward their progress, may be laying the foundation of a knowledge that may eventually lead to a well-earned, widely-spread, and undying reputation. Sir Joshua Reynolds has said:—"Nothing is denied to well-directed exertion;" to which he might have added, "that which is worth doing at all, is worth doing well," or at least as well as you possibly can. The truth of these dogmas will be the more apparent upon examining the creations of those men of genius who have long since mingled with their kindred dust, but the memory of whom survives, and will survive as long as their works exist for our admiration and example. Referring to our own English school, how pre-eminent for industry, observance, and carefulness stand the works of Hogarth. You will, by studying his pictures, see the attention that he paid to his back-grounds and all the minor accessories which make up a picture: his perspective in particular is, with few exceptions, worthy of imitation by artists of the present day. There is no slovenliness masked by a slap-dash execution; nothing of the careless "that will do" system; but all is care, attention, and knowledge, and that, too, at a time when the laws of perspective were not so well understood as at present. Look also at the works of John Martin, the illustrator of Milton: see the power he possessed in composition, dependent entirely on his knowledge of perspective. The great Turner, Calcott, Constable, Stanfield, Roberts, and Danby, all of these are masters of its laws, and mark the results in their hands. I trust with these examples before your eyes you will allow no difficulty to stop your onward course, and that you will not rest satisfied until you have laid the foundation of a thorough and complete knowledge of perspective. The first steps are, I admit, difficult, and demand a considerable amount of patient and untiring energy, without which success itself is deprived of half its pleasure; but the rewards are amply worth a struggle, and I both sincerely hope and confidently trust, that the majority of my hearers will perpetuate their fame in such memorials of their genius as shall win golden opinions from all the patrons of our delightful art.

The specific elements of form or contour are simply two—*i. e. straight* and *curved* lines, and from the combinations of these two arise the infinity of forms which every moment present themselves to our notice. Objects are conveyed to the eye of the untutored in their abstract and not perspective form. A square, for instance, when viewed by such a spectator, is conveyed to the mind as a *perfect* square; but the *tutored* eye sees it foreshortened, or with three parts of its dimensions less than the other, *i. e.* in perspective. This will be more apparent by a reference to circles in perspective, parallel to the horizon, the diagrams of which are truly worked. You will then see the changes which take place in their form: for instance, when situated immediately in front of the spectator, it (the circle) is a somewhat symmetrical form; but placed either to the right or left of the spectator, you will observe that one side of the figure is depressed or elevated, according as it is placed above or below the horizontal line.

This, together with the elongation of the circle, was for many years a matter of dispute; but the application of the prism, by Dr. Wollaston, to drawing, shows the truth of the theory. Mons. Gavard invented a mechanical apparatus called the "pantograph diagraph," by means of which the most complicated designs, either architectural or sculptural, can be correctly reduced to any scale, and that too in beautiful perspective.

On looking at the astragal of a capital, you will see that the sides of the circle are considerably depressed on the side nearest the eye of the spectator. The same remarks apply to domes. These, from being usually considerably above the horizontal line, are seriously affected by the position from which they are viewed. Hence the necessity, that all those whose profession it is to delineate form should be intimately acquainted with the laws of perspective, particularly architects, since a just appreciation of their designs would greatly depend upon the *perspective views* of those designs being correctly executed.

Important as these laws are to the painter, they are equally deserving the attention of the engraver, as the latter labours under the disadvantage of the want of colour. Having merely lines, in addition to light and shade, wherewith to describe contour and surface, it is necessary that he should be intimately acquainted with perspective, without which he will never be sure that he is not placing his lines in such a manner as to form the antithesis of that which he really wishes. In fine, there is no branch of the arts in which perspective is not a valuable auxiliary, and the necessity for its study cannot be too much insisted upon. Most authors have divided perspective into two parts—linear and aerial. The latter I entirely discard, as it is exclusively the property of light and shade. In the place of this I would divide perspective into three parts, viz.:—

1. Parallel perspective, or where the objects to be delineated are parallel to the plane of the picture.

2. Oblique, or where the objects are situated at a less angle than 90° to the plane of the picture. And,

3. The theory of shadows.

MONUMENTAL BRASSES IN THE OLD CHURCH AT HACKNEY.

Few parish churches have contained such a numerous assemblage of monuments of various kinds, as appear to have belonged to this church, originally dedicated to St. Augustine, and whose former site is indicated by the tower, which was allowed to remain when the new church was built in another part of the present extensive churchyard.

Different causes have produced the disappearance of such memorials, the chief of which may be held to have been the reluctance of the authorities to introduce in their new edifices any kind of materials which bore the marks of time or former fashions, however interesting they might be from their associations, or valuable on account of their data or historical reference. Stowe, Weever, and other old authors have preserved an account of such monuments as remained in the old church at their time, as well as of some others which had been removed or been obliterated; and, among these, there were several appertaining to noble names and distinguished personages. In reference to the latter, it appears remarkable that several of them should have been wholly lost within little more than a century after the date of their erection. The monument of Henry, Lord Percy, who died in 1537, and which appears among the *desiderata* chronicled by Weever, is an example. Another, the memorial of one belonging to a more humble class, contained the effigy, in brass, of Alice Ryder, represented with a milk-pail on her head: she appears to have been a 'milk-wife,' and is said to have obtained great wealth by the sale of her commodity, in the city, and became a great benefactress to the church; but neither her merits nor the singularity of her monument had proved sufficient to secure its duration. Her epitaph was contained in the following rugged couplet:—

"For the soul of Allis Ryder of your charite
Say a paternoster and an ave."

Another epitaph indicates an author strongly addicted to a quibble; it ran as follows:—

"Jone Onely, the onely most faithful wife of John Onely, of Warwickshire, esquire, to whose soul the onely Trinity be merciful. Amen. She dyed 1525."

The inscription, "Here lies Jone Curteys, the daughter of —— Shordych, anno 1399," induced Stowe to conceive that the probable residence of the father of the lady here-mentioned was that old house near Well-street, in this parish, called Shore, or Shoreditch-place, and which has been ascribed by tradition as having been the residence of the celebrated Jane Shore, whose portrait was preserved in the house to support the tradition. A monument to Sir John Shoreditch formerly existed in the church.

Among the few ancient monuments which have been preserved in the modern church, is a fine brass, containing the effigy of Christopher Urswick, formerly vicar of this parish, who was likewise almoner to Henry the Seventh, an ecclesiastic of high attainments, and an eminent benefactor to this parish; likewise, a curious little brass to Hugh Johnson, representing that divine in the act of expounding from the pulpit.

I am not aware how I became possessed of the impression that I should find a brass in the old tower remaining, but being accidentally in Hackney, and having such an impression, I procured admittance, and, with the assistance of the sexton, who was aware of its whereabouts, removed a quantity of rubbish, by which the object of our search was covered up, so as to examine it and to procure a rubbing, which was not done without trouble, for the brass and the stone in which it is inlaid were redolent with the damp and filth of the noisome and abominable nook in which it had been buried, among

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